



# COVID-19 & THE CHSP – INFORMATION FOR CLIENTS, FAMILIES AND CARERS

19/08/2020

## What is the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP)?

The CHSP is an entry-level home support program. It helps people over 65 years old to live safe and independent lives in their own homes and communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples over 50 years are also eligible for the CHSP.

The CHSP funds a number of subsidised services to help older Australians, including:

- domestic assistance (such as house cleaning and linen services)
- transport
- meals
- personal care
- home maintenance (including gardening)
- home modifications
- goods, equipment and assistive technology
- social support
- nursing
- allied health and therapy services

The CHSP also supports people who are caring for older Australians through planned respite services for older people. These services allow carers to take a break from their usual caring role.

To find out more about the services available, contact My Aged Care on **1800 200 422** (free call).

To get support for yourself or a loved one call the Older Persons COVID-19 Support Line on 1800 171 866. It is available Monday to Friday, except public holidays, from 8:30am to 6pm.

## Is it safe to access CHSP services?

The CHSP promotes and supports the safety and welfare of older Australians in their home. This includes helping to protect you from coronavirus (COVID-19).

The aged care worker visiting your home must take all necessary measures to ensure you stay safe. They will be following all the current advice.

## Can I access CHSP Services without an assessment?

Yes, if you need urgent services.

You do not need an assessment if you need:

- Urgent CHSP services
- For a limited time due to COVID-19
- Your services will end by 31 October 2020.

In all other, non-urgent situations, CHSP services should not start before an assessment has taken place.

If you need permanent care or care beyond 31 October 2020, you can arrange an assessment through [My Aged Care](#). Your CHSP service provider can help you with this.

For access to new or additional aged care services call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422. My Aged Care can also create or update your client record and arrange for an assessment.

## When can I go back to my social support group and other group activities?

In March 2020, the Australian Government cancelled all CHSP in-person group activities to help protect vulnerable people from COVID-19. Since then, a number of states and territories have started to ease restrictions. The way restrictions are easing is different in each state and territory.

When CHSP providers re-open social support services they must follow the guidelines, advice and restrictions in their state or territory. This includes maintaining physical distancing and infection control measures. Providers also must have a COVIDSafe plan for their work place and service delivery model.

If your social support activities stopped, contact your CHSP provider for advice on when they might recommence.

More resources and specific information on state and territory restrictions are available at [www.australia.gov.au](http://www.australia.gov.au).

## What do I do if I feel lonely or have concerns about my mental health?

The Australian Government understands CHSP clients may be lonely or anxious during the pandemic. This might be because you are unable to participate in your preferred social and recreational activities at the moment.

Support is available.

- The [Head to Health website](#) has a range of resources people to cope with anxiety or worry about COVID-19.
- Beyond Blue provides digital resources and a phone counselling service (1300 224 636). Accredited mental health professionals are available 24 hours, seven days a week.
- Lifeline (13 11 14).

CHSP service providers are developing new service delivery models to help clients stay socially connected. To maintain physical distancing this could be:

- Internet or phone-based welfare checks.
- Online social group activities.

## What if I am worried about going to the shops for groceries or have trouble preparing meals?

The CHSP may be able to help you with grocery shopping or preparing meals. This may include Domestic Assistance (unaccompanied shopping) and Meals (delivered to your home). The Australian Government has provided **\$120.2 million** (\$50 million for CHSP meal providers) to help expand this during the pandemic.

To find out more about these services contact **My Aged Care** on **1800 200 422**. They may refer you to a local CHSP provider who can deliver these services to you.

## Can I still get my lawn mowed or my house cleaned during the pandemic?

Yes, most CHSP service types are essential aged care services and should continue. Group activities may be postponed.

CHSP providers must ensure the safe delivery of essential aged care services to protect their employees, volunteers and clients. If there is a change to your service delivery, CHSP providers must contact you as soon as possible.

You or your family may need help discussing service concerns with your provider. The Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) is a free advocacy service that can provide this support. Contact OPAN on **1800 700 600** from 9:30am to 4:00pm Monday to Friday.

## What in home help is available if I want to move out of my residential aged care facility and live with my family during COVID-19?

There are two tiers of support available under the CHSP for residential care clients who choose to temporarily move out due to COVID-19.

### **Tier 1 Clinical support for clients who re-locate from a facility that is significantly impacted by COVID-19**

Temporary clinical support is available to clients who have had to relocate from an significantly impacted Victorian residential aged care facility. This support is the equivalent to a [Level 4 Home Care Package](#) and can be accessed at no additional cost to the client.

If a residential aged care facility is significantly impacted by an outbreak of COVID-19, the facility will advise clients what support is available to them.

The client or their family can then call OPAN on **1800 700 600** to discuss their care needs. OPAN will provide information on available services, the process for transition

to community care and can arrange for a referral to a suitable local provider. The local provider will deliver clinical services in the home for up to eight weeks.

Services that may be accessed through this program include:

- Personal Care: provides assistance to maintain appropriate standards of hygiene and grooming.
- Nursing: clinical care provided by a registered or enrolled nurse. This care is directed to treatment and monitoring of medically diagnosed clinical conditions.

In these cases the residential aged care provider will need to recommend a care plan to the home support provider. They should also work with the provider to determine a suitable care start and end date.

The client's family will be responsible for care and safety of residents during their time away from the facility.. This includes considering client mobility and access to mobility aids. It also includes the capacity of the family to provide care for 24 hours per day and a suitable physical environment. Residents with symptomatic COVID-19 will not be released from the aged care facility.

If the decision is to relocate a client from residential aged care, then:

- All household members must agree to remain in quarantine for at least 14-days after the resident enters the household (if asymptomatic).
- A COVID-19 test must also be undertaken and returned as negative by the entire household prior to returning to the community.
- Residential aged care clients should not go into a home where anyone in the house are at risk of severe illness (e.g. underlying health condition, the elderly).
- Families must use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) (full body gown, gloves, face mask and eye protection) when providing direct care during the 14-day quarantine.
- Clients and their families should discuss with the residential aged care provider about what support they can provide them in accessing personal protective equipment and any necessary mobility or toiletry aids.

### **Tier 2 Entry-level services for clients who voluntarily decide to return to the community**

Clients that are not eligible for the complex clinical support outlined in Tier 1, but still choose to return to the community, may contact My Aged Care on **1800 200 422**. My Aged Care will provide information on the services available, and the process for transition to the community. They can arrange for a referral to access entry-level home support services for up to eight weeks through the CHSP.

This support is available to all clients returning home from a residential facility.

Services that can be accessed through the CHSP include:

- Meals
- Transport (essential trips to medical appointments only)
- Social Support Individual
- Unaccompanied Shopping
- Personal care
- Nursing
- Allied Health and Therapy Services.

Tier 1 clients are able to access the additional services listed, except for meals and transport in addition to the personal care and nursing which is already provided. Clients accessing Tier 2 services may pay a client contribution fee in accordance with normal arrangements under the CHSP.

It is important to understand that these services will be entry-level. They will not provide the same level or frequency of care available in an aged care facility. Clients who need more complex or higher level aged care services may need to remain in their facility or another facility. Residents with symptomatic COVID-19 will not be released from the aged care facility.

The client's family will be responsible for their care and safety during their time away from the facility. This includes considering client mobility and access to mobility aids. This also includes the capacity of the family to provide care for 24 hours per day and a suitable physical environment. Residents with symptomatic COVID-19 will not be released from the aged care facility.

Service availability is dependent on the availability of individual providers. In the first instance, families should contact My Aged Care to check the availability of CHSP service providers in your area. This should be done before a client leaves a residential aged care facility.

If the decision is to relocate a client from a residential aged care facility with an active case of COVID-19, or where the facility is in an area with community transmission, then:

- All household members must agree to remain in quarantine for at least 14-days after the resident enters the household (if asymptomatic).
- A COVID-19 test must also be undertaken by the whole household and returned as negative prior to returning to the community.
- Residential aged care clients should not go into a home where anyone in the house are at risk of severe illness (e.g. underlying health condition, elderly).
- Families must use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) (full body gown, gloves, face mask and eye protection) when providing direct care during the 14-day quarantine.
- Clients and their families should discuss with the residential aged care provider about what support they can provide them in accessing personal protective equipment and any necessary mobility or toiletry aids.

## What if I have more questions about COVID-19?

To find out more, phone the **National Coronavirus Helpline** on **1800 020 080** or go to [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au)

If you need to find out more about support services, contact **My Aged Care** by phoning **1800 200 422**.

If you have any concerns about your care services, or carer, please contact your CHSP service provider.

## Where can CHSP service providers find more information?

The Department of Health has published fact sheets for CHSP providers including information on:

- CHSP emergency funding
- CHSP flexibility provisions.
- Other CHSP support and program arrangements.

Webinars are also available on the [Department of Health's website](#) for on-demand viewing.

Providers should subscribe to the normal aged care sector email announcements and newsletters to receive regular updates.

For more information, CHSP service providers should contact their Funding Arrangement Manager.